



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of New Hampshire*

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
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**OPERATOR OF MANCHESTER FLOWER SHOP AGREES TO PAY \$140,000  
TO SETTLE CIVIL COMPLAINT FOR FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING  
SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS**

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE** - United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced today that, on January 11, 2006, Donna M. Levesque of Hooksett, New Hampshire agreed to pay the United States \$140,000 in order to settle a civil complaint that alleged that she fraudulently obtained benefits from the Social Security Administration ("SSA").

In December of 2004, the United States filed a civil complaint contending that Levesque violated the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733, by making false statements and misrepresentations in connection with applications to receive and to continue receiving benefits from the SSA. According to the Complaint, beginning in at least 1995, Levesque obtained benefits from the SSA to which she was not entitled. Levesque fraudulently obtained these federal benefits by making false statements on applications and by failing to reveal material facts about her work that, if disclosed, would have demonstrated that she was not eligible to receive these benefits. Although Levesque continually represented to the SSA that she was disabled and unable to work, she was working regularly by operating LaBow Florist and Gifts, a business in Manchester, New Hampshire. As a result of her false representations that she was disabled and unable to work, between 1995 and 2002, Levesque and her minor children received \$122,789.70 in benefits to which they were not entitled.

Levesque agreed to enter into a consent decree in which she would pay the United States \$140,000 in order to resolve this lawsuit. On January 11, 2006, Chief U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe signed the consent decree and entered a judgment against Levesque for \$140,000.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "When individuals obtain government benefits through fraud, they harm not only those honest recipients who truly need the benefits, but also every taxpayer who contributes their hard earned tax dollars to the program. This office will aggressively ferret out such fraud wherever we find it."

— M O R E —

This case was investigated by the Office of Investigations of the Social Security

Administration's Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney John J. Farley handled the case for the United States.

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